

United We Ride Implementation Grant for South Carolina

(Note, because we chose to address one of the optional priority areas, we also took the option to add the extra pages to cover evaluation and more detail on implementation strategies!)

Plans, Collaboration and Progress for Coordination of Transportation Resources

Planning for and administering South Carolina's programs for transportation for the public is conducted by the SC Department of Transportation. SCDOT is working actively to bridge the historic gap between planning and construction of roads and other infrastructure and planning and coordination of transportation for the citizens of the state. It is also providing strong leadership in bringing about new approaches to the coordination of human service and public transportation in the state, with an ambitious vision of having a state-wide network of ten regional, coordinated transportation systems by the year 2009. SCDOT has chosen to work through South Carolina's Council of Governments (COG's) to make the vision a reality.

The first regional entity to be funded by SCDOT for coordination of health, human service and public transportation was the Lower Savannah Council of Governments (LSCOG). In 2000, LSCOG received a grant to begin a demonstration program, and formed a Regional Transportation Management Association (RTMA). Formed by memoranda of understanding from county governments in the COG's six member counties, the RTMA brought together human service and public transportation providers to become part of a regional network of coordinating transportation providers. These autonomous organizations ranged from agencies serving older adults and people with disabilities, to providers of rural, public demand-response service, an agency

operating large buses for commuter service to beach resort areas, a private, for-profit van service and a public fixed-route service operator. All were operating independently of each other; some did not even know each other. There was initially little interest in working as partners in a regional coordination effort. After four years of continuous progress by the LSRTMA, the members have become RTMA partners, have set and pursued a vision and developed goals and an action plan, which actually fits hand in glove with the SCDOT plan and with United We Ride goals and visions.

The RTMA and SCDOT can point with pride to a series of significant accomplishments, including regional coordination of FTA 5310 funds, the start-up of two new county-wide coordinated public transit systems, using available seats on existing vehicles and coordination by a mobility manager. LSCOG also leads the region's implementation of coordination for out-of-county trips to medical centers enabled by cooperation from the state Medicaid agency, local transportation providers and the acquisition of communications and dispatching infrastructure. These on-the-ground successes are a result of coordination and collaboration among agencies operating programs from funding streams as diverse as Medicaid, Older Americans Act, TANF, Vocational Rehabilitation, and disabilities and special needs funding, rural health centers, adult day care, public transit (FTA) funds and even include faith-based volunteer drivers and local matching funding. This coordination is occurring at the local, state and national levels simultaneously, but at differing rates.

The vision set in 2003 by the RMTA partners is as follows

"In Lower Savannah RTMA, our transit system allows riders to travel seamlessly throughout our region, across our state and to neighboring states. Our

infrastructure of compatible equipment, short client wait times, AVL systems, employer participation and regional computerized scheduling provides for designated transfer stations throughout the region and ties into rail and air travel. Information is accessible at a touch in transportation centers as well as related websites. RTMA provides oversight and assists in securing sufficient funding for our operations. Our legislators understand and support our goals. We are the model for South Carolina."

SCDOT is working, through this model, to develop, test and implement plans and action steps that 1) can be replicated and/or adapted in other regions of the state and 2) will become the embodiment of the SCDOT plan in operation. Coordination of health, human service, private and public resources goes hand-in-hand with mobility information and assistance and mobility management; each component is a necessary part of a greater system, providing access to full and independent community life for people who are in need of transportation assistance.

LSCOG is working toward combining its role as the state's pilot Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), its role as the Area Agency on Aging, and as transportation planning and coordination leader for the region to create a multi-purpose call center for services in the region to support independent living - combining transportation coordination with trip brokerage and mobility information and management, linkages with telemedicine, personal security, pharmacy assistance, disease management and information, referral and assistance with long term support and benefits needs to promote and allow independent living. By offering alternatives to transporting rural consumers to medical appointments just for health monitoring, finding ways to

provide peace of mind, including delivery of groceries or medications with home-delivered meals, helping people find transportation to needed destinations, and promoting health through in-home disease management, cost savings to federal benefit programs and health outcomes for individuals for whom travel for these services and necessities is difficult is tremendous. Advances in the exchange of information and in technology coupled with the need to reduce health care costs will make this vision achievable.

Emergency Response

The Lower Savannah Region contains much of the hurricane evacuation route from Charleston and Hilton Head. Transportation systems in the region are a part of evacuation plans now and are called on to assist when hurricanes or other disasters occur or threaten. A large nuclear plant occupies substantial parts of two of the LSCOG counties. Parts of the area are near large dams. Quite a bit of active railway traverses the region. For these reasons disaster preparedness plans are in place, coordinated by state and local emergency management centers. A recent train derailment resulting in a deadly chlorine spill in Aiken County caused the evacuation of an area surrounding the accident. During this disaster, emergency response was commendable. In community meetings following the disaster, however, the need for more consideration to be given to the *transportation* aspect of evacuation, especially for residents of nursing homes and the hospitals in the area became a priority. This local fear was heightened during the recent transportation disasters in the New Orleans area during Hurricane Katrina.

Lower Savannah RTMA partners include Regional Transit Authorities to the South and East, also actively involved in evacuation preparedness from the coast and who

are partners in testing equipment and providing input into ways to improve the traditional emergency planning and response process.

Through a grant from FTA, the LSCOG has acquired 100 digital radios, which have been installed in vehicles used in the region to provide coordinated service. This radio equipment links the separate transportation providers and systems so that they can communicate with each other, as a part of the Palmetto 800 statewide communication system, and enables RTMA coordinating partner providers to communicate with law enforcement and emergency management in the state. RTMA partners have also begun testing AVL/GPS technology to see how it can apply to increasing coordination and dispatching efficiency in real-time. Dispatchers can now view on computer screen the location of vehicles as they plan trips. These are important steps in improving the transportation piece of emergency response planning. As a part of the planning process to develop the regional mobility management system in the LSCOG region, disaster response for transportation disadvantaged groups will be a focus for continuing improvement. While a plan is in place, lessons learned from recent local and other disasters in our country can assist SC in improving its disaster planning. Transit authorities bordering the LSCOG region to the south and southeast are also a part of the RTMA partners group and share technology and planning functions in a cooperative manner.

Coordination and Consumer Involvement

Once the initial success of the LSCOG/RTMA's coordination initiatives became evident, other regional entities became involved and funded and the SCDOT vision for a statewide network is advancing.

In the meantime, the LSCOG became the state's pilot site for development of SC's Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). This innovative program was jointly funded in 2003 by CMS and the Administration on Aging, both within the federal Department of Health and Human Services. ADRC target groups for streamlined access to resources related to long term care supports are older adults, family caregivers, and adults with physical disabilities. LSCOG's transportation coordination programs and their aging and disabilities programs are co-located within the same LSCOG department. An essential partner in shaping the development and operation of the ADRC has been the COG's ADRC Advisory Committee, composed of stakeholders, including consumers. Planning, marketing, and operations benefit from consumer advice in the process. The ADRC's testing of a new on-line Medicaid eligibility application included focus groups with consumers, including individuals with various disabilities. The mechanisms for continuing consumer involvement to guide United We Ride implementation are well established in the region.

In the summer of 2005, at the request of the county government, LSCOG took over administration and management of the FTA 5307 funds for fixed route public service in the urbanized portion of Aiken County. One of the first actions of the COG was to organize a group of consumers and stakeholders representing older adults, people with disabilities and people with low incomes to start a dialogue on how the system could better serve the community. That group continues to provide valuable input to the COG on system operation and improvement. LSCOG sponsored a community forum, attended by 100 individuals, to get ideas for how the system should operate. In the spring of 2006,

LSCOG will be sending a local team, including consumers, public transit and human service representatives to Washington to participate in the Easter Seals Project Action workshop on enhancing the system's ability to serve people with disabilities.

Mobility Management

It became apparent locally, through needs assessments, calls for assistance and local input, that although information and assistance are powerful tools for streamlining consumer access to independent community living, mobility, and the transportation to enable it, is the other essential component of true *access*. At the request of LSCOG, the state unit on aging (housed in the office of the Lieutenant Governor – {LGOA}), and with support from the state Medicaid agency, the University of SC and the SCDOT, submitted a successful application to CMS in the summer of 2005 under the Systems Transformation grants. A major part of that grant implementation, which is strongly supported by SCDOT, will be to help expand the Lower Savannah Aging and Disability Resource Center to become a transportation coordination and mobility information and assistance center, focusing on needs of transportation disadvantaged populations and incorporating a planning and development process, new technology and the RTMA network of coordinating providers of transportation services. The CMS grant will 1) provide overall technical assistance for holding a stakeholders retreat to coordinate all components of the project, 2) help with acquiring the needed technology equipment for the mobility management center and the participating transportation providers and 3) help to compensate staff to work on project development and implementation, including a part-time mobility information specialist. SCDOT and LSCOG are requesting United We Ride implementation funding to fund contractual, on-site expert help with the actual

development and implementation of the prototype mobility management center as we make it operational, to help with evaluation as we progress and part-time staff needed to fill out what the CMS grant does not cover. Another crucial activity is to add transportation information to the web-based data base of resources for people in need of mobility assistance. Much of this work can be done as a part of the Systems Transformation Grant, but the United We Ride funding can help to make this implementation fully functional in this region and help with plans for replication.

Groundwork in preparation for embarking on implementation of the coordination, mobility information and management center was laid during the summer of 2005, thanks to a study to gather data on current fleets, travel patterns, client and funding source utilization, and excess capacity among current health, human service and public transportation providers. This study was conducted and funded for LSCOG by the Clyburn Transportation Center at South Carolina State University, located in the Lower Savannah Region. In mid January, 2006, work on designing the implementation of the Mobility Information and Management Center will begin. Within that process, SCDOT wants to assure that the transition from vision to operations is carried out skillfully and that the manner in which the mobility management center is developed and made operational is workable in the Lower Savannah Region and other regions in the state which might replicate it next. Being able to pool United We Ride funding with the CMS funding will maximize the effectiveness and outcomes for both projects and demonstrate the links between improving coordination of transportation resources through mobility management and technological advances and enhancement of mobility for transportation disadvantaged populations in our area.

Another variable which could have an impact on the development of the regional mobility management center is the outcome of the current procurement for regional brokerage of Medicaid Non-Emergency transportation in South Carolina. Lower Savannah and Santee-Lynches COGs are partnering to submit a proposal to be the regional call-center and broker for Medicaid transportation in the ten-county area. If successful, the call center for Medicaid non-emergency transportation will be operated by the LSCOG. How the Medicaid transportation brokerage will operate will be crucial. Other firms desiring to become the broker for this region may not be as likely to carry out that function in a way that would uphold the coordination among funding streams that currently exists at the local level. Medicaid and other riders share vehicles and trips under current arrangements. An outside broker with no involvement with other health, human service or public transportation service provision operating an out-of-state call center, could undermine progress in mixed use of vehicles for trips to common locations.

Action Plan and Evaluation

- January, 2006 - hold a two-day retreat to discuss implementation strategies.
Involve key stakeholders and consumers.
- February 2006 – hold second session for follow-up and setting specific directions.
- March – May – With advisory committee, research and finalize recommendations on
 - technology/infrastructure needs
 - staffing plan

- inter-relationships with Medicaid brokerage and local transportation RTMA network
- Review and apply findings from SC State-funded current resource study
- Work with local transportation providers to determine roles, relationships and operational details
- February-September – Assist state data-base maintenance staff in adding transportation resources to SC Access web-based database to give web-based access to mobility information
- March – July – Conduct training for ADRC staff on mobility issues, resources and management
- June – September – develop marketing materials and presentations for center
- August – October – purchase, install and conduct training on equipment use and operational protocols for providers and staff
- September – October – conduct training with ADRC and Center partner agencies and advisory committee
- September – Hire and train mobility information specialist
- October – Begin marketing mobility information center
- Mid October - “Go Live!” – Kick-off celebration and beginning operation for expanded Mobility Information Center
- December – generation of report on process and lessons learned
- January – December – On-going evaluation of program process and progress to keep project on course, to include survey of advisory groups, staff, partners, and those assisted for preliminary feedback on and adjustments of operations.

Evaluation

The Center for Health Services and Policy Research (CHSPR) at the Arnold School of Public Health at the University of South Carolina is the contractual evaluator for the implementation of the CMS Systems Change grant. As the two implementation processes will dove-tail, it seems prudent to use the same group to evaluate process and progress in the United We Ride implementation project. During the year of implementation activities, the USC CHSPR will measure the progress of the mobility information and assistance center toward improving access to transportation services for persons with disabilities, persons with lower incomes and older adults.

Indicators for success will include the following:

- Consumers who use transportation coordinated through and managed via the newly developed transportation information technology system will report
 1. reduced time and effort learning about and obtaining transportation services
 2. reduced frustration and confusion regarding mobility options and application/reservation procedures
 3. greater success in obtaining actual transportation services, and
 4. greater success in accessing appropriate community services due to better transportation linkages
- Agencies will report
 1. greater numbers of consumers gaining access to services due to better transportation linkages

2. more efficient sharing of transportation and reduced wait time for consumers,
and
3. more efficient use of transportation personnel

Additional measures of success will include comparisons in number of rides provided in the region, cost per trip, vehicle utilization (reduction in total number of vehicles) and, later, replication in other parts of the state as a result of work conducted under these grants.

Sources: Consumer satisfaction surveys, mail-out surveys, consumer focus groups, interviews with management and front line staff, agency record reviews.

LSCOG has made great strides in the coordination of transportation and in leading the implementation of the SCDOT vision and plan. However, it is now time to move the effort up the ladder towards total coordinated mobility. At the present time, four counties are involved in coordinated provision of human service and public transportation. These operations each present opportunities for enhancing that coordination. The other two counties are in need of attention and assistance. Some of the data for these counties have been collected and is in process of being analyzed. Preliminary findings show that there are excessive numbers of human service vehicles in a region underserved with transportation for many who need it. United We Ride funding is needed to help design the specific implementation strategies and develop plans for expansion to the rest of the state.

Funding from United We Ride would enable the consultant, who is working with LSCOG on the CMS grant, to do the following:

- Finalize the inventory developed in the SCSU study.

- Identify areas of need
- Review program capacities and identify where overlap can be removed
- Document the procedure so it can be replicated in other parts of the State
- Establishing a base case for future evaluation.
- Evaluate the disaster response plan and lead work to upgrade it
- Assist LSCOG in developing and carrying out the implementation strategy for the Mobility Information and Management Center

Budget

Contractual:

Lower Savannah COG \$75,000.00

\$48,000 Sub-contract with McLary Management Company for consulting assistance

\$11,500 Sub-contract with USC Center for Health Services Policy and Research for evaluation

\$15,500 Lower Savannah staff to work in implementing project

The CMS Grant is providing LSCOG with around \$1.2 million over five years to carry out its part of a Systems Transformation grant, which includes help to implement of the mobility information and assistance center. The two grants will use the same consultant and evaluators to enhance the outcomes of both projects. The CMS grant will help to pay for some of the technology that is lacking, that the UWR grant can not pay for and the UWR grant will help supply part of the staffing, the consultant who has been working on other related studies, to link the projects and assist in developing and carrying out the implementation strategy that will work best for South Carolina. "The whole will be greater than the sum of its parts!"

GRANTS.GOV

Grant Application Package

Opportunity Title:	State Coordination Grants component of the United We Ride
Offering Agency:	DOT/Federal Transit Administration
CFDA Number:	20.514
CFDA Description:	Transit Planning and Research
Opportunity Number:	DOT-GRANTS-090905-001
Competition ID:	
Opportunity Open Date:	09/09/2005
Opportunity Close Date:	11/28/2005
Agency Contact:	Heffer, Bryna, Transportation Services Ad



This opportunity is only open to organizations, applicants who are submitting grant applications on behalf of a company, state, local or tribal government, academia, or other type of organization.

* Application Filing Name:

Mandatory Documents

Move Form to Submission List
=>

Move Form to Documents List
<=

Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

Optional Documents

Move Form to Submission List
=>

Move Form to Documents List
<=

Optional Completed Documents for Submission
Other Attachments Form

- Enter a name for the application in the Application Filing Name field.
 - This application can be completed in its entirety offline; however, you will need to login to the Grants.gov website during the submission process.
 - You can save your application at any time by clicking the "Save" button at the top of your screen.
 - The "Submit" button will not be functional until the application is complete and saved.
- Open and complete all of the documents listed in the "Mandatory Documents" box. Complete the SF-424 form first.
 - It is recommended that the SF-424 form be the first form completed for the application package. Data entered on the SF-424 will populate data fields in other mandatory and optional forms and the user cannot enter data in these fields.
- The forms listed in the "Mandatory Documents" box and "Optional Documents" may be predefined forms, such as SF-424, forms where a document needs to be attached, such as the Project Narrative or a combination of both. "Mandatory Documents" are required for this application. "Optional Documents" can be used to provide additional support for this application or may be required for specific types of grant activity. Reference the application package instructions for more information regarding "Optional Documents".
- To open an item, simply click on it to select the item and then click on the "Open" button. When you have completed a form or document, click the form/document name to select it, and then click the => button. This will move the form/document to the "Completed Documents" box. To remove a form/document from the "Completed Documents" box, click the form/document name to select it, and then click the <= button. This will return the form/document to the "Mandatory Documents" or "Optional Documents" box.
- When you open a required form, the fields which must be completed are highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields are displayed in white. If you enter invalid or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message.
- Click the "Submit" button to submit your application to Grants.gov.
 - Once you have properly completed all required documents and saved the application, the "Submit" button will become active.
 - You will be taken to a confirmation page where you will be asked to verify that this is the funding opportunity and Agency to which you want to submit an application.

Application Submission Verification and Signature

Opportunity Title: State Coordination Grants component of the United We Ride I

Offering Agency: DOT/Federal Transit Administration

CFDA Number: 20.514

CFDA Description: Transit Planning and Research

Opportunity Number: DOT-GRANTS-090905-001

Competition ID:

Opportunity Open Date: 09/09/2006

Opportunity Close Date: 11/28/2005

Application Filing Name: State Coordination Grant United We Ride



Please review the summary provided to ensure that the information listed is correct and that you are submitting an application to the opportunity for which you want to apply.

If you want to submit the application package for the listed funding opportunity, click on the "Sign and Submit Application" button below to complete the process. You will then see a screen prompting you to enter your user ID and password.

If you do not want to submit the application at this time, click the "Exit Application" button. You will then be redirected to the previous page where you can make changes to the required forms and documents or exit the process.

If this is not the application for the funding opportunity for which you wish to apply, you must exit this application package and then download and complete the correct application package.



APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input type="checkbox"/> Construction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction		2. DATE SUBMITTED []	Applicant Identifier []
Preapplication <input type="checkbox"/> Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction		3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE []	State Application Identifier []
		4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY []	Federal Identifier []

5. APPLICANT INFORMATION Organizational Unit:

* Legal Name: South Carolina Department of Transportation	Department: []
* Organizational DUNS: 808335291	Division: []
Address: * Street1: 955 Park Street * Street2: [] * City: Columbia County [] * State: SC * Zip Code: 29202 * Country: USA	Name and telephone number of person to be contacted on matters involving this application (give area code) Prefix: [] * First Name: Thomas Middle Name: [] * Last Name: Johnson * Suffix: [] * Email: johnsonst@scoDOT.org * Phone Number (give area code): 803-737-0145 Fax Number (give area code): []

6. * EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):
57-600854

8. TYPE OF APPLICATION:
 New Continuation Revision
If Revision, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es)
A. Increase Award B. Decrease Award C. Increase Duration
D. Duration Other (specify): []

7. * TYPE OF APPLICANT: State Government
Other (specify): []

10. * LOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE 20.514

9. * NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY:
DOT/Federal Transit Administration

TITLE: Transit Planning and Research

11. * DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT:
Expansion of Coordinated Services in Lower Savannah RTMA

12. * AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):
Statewide

13. * PROPOSED PROJECT:

* Start Date: 04/01/2008	* Ending Date: 04/01/2007
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14. * CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS OF:

* a. Applicant: 2	* b. Project: 2
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15. * ESTIMATED FUNDING:

* a. Federal	\$ 75,000.00
* b. Applicant	\$ 0.00
* c. State	\$ 0.00
* d. Local	\$ 0.00
* e. Other	\$ 0.00
* f. Program Income	\$ 0.00
g. TOTAL	\$ 75,000.00

16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?
a. YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON:
 YES DATE []
b. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372
 OR PROGRAM HAS NOT BEEN SELECTED BY STATE FOR REVIEW

18. * TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT. THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.

a. Authorized Representative: Prefix: [] * First Name: Thomas Middle Name: []
* Last Name: Johnson Suffix: []
b. Program Manager: [] * c. Telephone Number (give area code): 803-737-0702
* Email: johnsonst@scoDOT.org Fax Number (give area code): []

d. Signature of Authorized Representative: Completed on submission to Grants.gov **e. Date Signed:** Completed on submission to Grants.gov